

Letter from the Editor

As Cuba appears on the brink of change, we are watching closely and contemplating our future role in the spiritual life of the Island country. The lessons of the former Soviet bloc suggest that communist countries do not undergo significant change with ease, but we learned that any time you have a political uprising; you have an evangelistic awakening, so the opportunity to impact change and help will be tremendous. When that happens we hope to be able to equip Cuban church leaders to manage the growth, coordinate volunteers for new programs and humanitarian aid, and participate in forming a new government.

After more than 47 years of total socialist government control in all aspects of the Cuban society, a challenge will be to help the emerging new Church Community to modernize, develop independent functioning, resources, institutional strength, and

build their organizational and administrative capacity. The church in Cuba is shrouded in archaic pre-1960 systems. It is divided, lacking in cooperation, mutual respect and effective networks. It lacks communications skills, functioning resources, and institutional capacity-building skills. If there is a change in government, these problems will magnify.

Now, more than ever, your support to ECHO-Cuba is drastically important to help us continue to mobilize hearts for the evangelical church in Cuba. We take great risks everyday for Christ Jesus, and our passion for God is "white hot".

Thank you for being part of this! Our prayer is that Cuba may be filled with His glory.



Teo Babun
ECHO-Cuba
Executive Director

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ECHO's Purpose and Vision

Things on the island of Cuba may be changing, but ECHO's mission remains the same:

Ministry Vision:

Building and empowering the Cuban Evangelical Christian Church, and uniting those who can help, with Cuban Christians who need help.

Ministry Mission: ECHO-Cuba is a mission community of Christ-centered people committed to reaching the people of Cuba with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are strengthened by our compassion for the Evangelical Christian Church. We perform this mission through programs, which promote Christian education, capital projects, social & human services, humanitarian needs, agricultural entrepreneurship, and church organizational capacity.

Fidel Castro Cedes Power to younger brother Raul Castro

On Monday night, July 31st a letter reportedly signed by [Fidel Castro](#) was read live on Cuban Television. The topic of this letter was a "temporary" secession of power to younger brother [Raul Castro](#) while Fidel undergoes surgery for an "acute intestinal crisis with sustained bleeding". This is the first time that Fidel, two weeks from 80th birthday, has relinquished power in nearly half a century.

We remain in contact with representatives, ministry partners and associates throughout Cuba who inform us that the "tension and vigilance is at an all time high" for anyone perceived to be difficult or problematic by the government. We are told that many calls to the exterior of Cuba are being blocked, possibly to prevent the flow of news. One of our contacts informs us that: "Raul still hasn't appeared in public, and everyone's wondering: 'What happens if Raul leaves the scene before Fidel?'"

Over the past year and a half ECHO-Cuba has taken part in the development of the [South Florida Humanitarian Aid Network for Cuba](#) with the intent of preparing South Florida to respond to a crisis in Cuba. ECHO-Cuba's network of churches and ministries throughout the island are in place as a means of emergency humanitarian aid distributions within Cuba should the need arise.



Dengue Fever possibly spreading in Cuba

An outbreak of [Dengue fever](#) in [Santiago](#) two weeks ago resulted in citywide quarantine by the Cuban Government, as well as the cancellation of Carnivals celebrating the [26th of July](#) (the day Castro's revolution began).

Several of our representatives contracted the illness, suffering from: up to 105 degree fever, severe headaches, retro-orbital (behind the eye) pain, severe joint and muscle pain, nausea and vomiting, and rash. The price to travel to Santiago has quadrupled in efforts to reduce the spread of the disease to the rest of the island, yet we are receiving reports from partner ministries that the fever is now appearing in other parts of Cuba, including Havana.

One of our Santiago representatives writes: "The entire city is in a crisis. I can't even begin to tell you...the cost of transportation has increased, and things are still very hard. Nevertheless, we are here, waiting and trusting in God that our health will get better."

Please keep the pastors, our representatives and all of

ECHO in the News

- "Church groups ready for missions in a Castro-free Cuba" by Tal Abbadly
- Sun-Sentinel
- August 3, 2006

... "The opportunity is going to be huge. It'll be tremendous," said Teo Babun, director of the Evangelical Christian Humanitarian Outreach in Miami. The group works with Protestant churches across Cuba on humanitarian and religious projects.

"The Cuban government is afraid that the opening of religion will put a church on every corner," he said.

Cubans remain predominantly Catholic, and many in South Florida say the Catholic Church is the exile community's anchor...

"Evangelism wave may wash across post-Fidel Cuba" by Alexandra Alter
Miami Herald
August 12, 2006

...As Fidel Castro's health crisis raised hopes among Cuban exiles of a political transition on the island, some South Florida Christian groups began preparing to send humanitarian aid, missionaries and volunteers to help Cuban churches expand their influence in a post-Castro society.

Catholic and Protestant leaders say they expect a political transformation, whenever that might occur, will open up opportunities for evangelism.

"We anticipate that any kind of change will start a tremendous growth cycle within the Cuban church," said Teo Babún, president of Evangelical Christian Humanitarian Outreach (Echo Cuba), a Miami organization that conducts humanitarian missions through churches in Cuba.

- Echo Cuba -- one of several U.S. Protestant groups seeking to strengthen their foothold on the island -- has developed a multi-pronged plan to help Cuban churches and religious leaders take a leading role in restoring civil society.

The group plans to equip Cuban church leaders to distribute supplies, coordinate volunteers and participate in forming a new government, Babún said. They have also contacted major Christian donors from around the world to contribute humanitarian aid to Cuba, he said.

Most church leaders in Cuba are warily monitoring the political situation, said Babún, whose organization tracks developments... on the island through a phone network of 20 Protestant Cuban pastors....

[For the complete article, please email news@echocuba.org](mailto:news@echocuba.org)

Traveling to Cuba

ECHO Cuba's Ministry Trip program is still going strong, despite current events. Now, more than ever, the Cuban church is desperate for encouragement and ministry. There is no need for you to have previous experience traveling to Cuba, or knowledge of Spanish, a missions trip to Cuba is possible through ECHO Cuba's Ministry Trip program.

For more information, please email Vanessa Pino: Vanessa@echocuba.org or call 786-202-7715